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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FCC
1919 - M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

8 September 1998

Dear Commissioner Ness,

I am enclosing information on local radio and the benefits classical music offers a wide, diverse audience. While I do not favor infringing First Amendment rights, I do support the concept that the public has rights which broadcasters should not violate. The public interest is poorly served in Southeast Michigan where classical music and fine arts are being driven from the local airwaves. As media giants expand, diversity in programming is fast disappearing. Since radio is an important means of publicizing achievement in the arts, shrinking air time creates an impediment for gifted young men and women from all racial and ethnic groups who pursue a career in classical music.

Since format diversification has suffered a severe loss in the greater Detroit metro area, the Greater Media-WQRS case, which occurred 21 November 1997, is an exception to the trend the FCC cites in "Review of the Radio Industry, 1997," MM Docket No. 98-35, Executive Summary.

I hope the accompanying data will be of some use to you, whether in your official capacity or parental role.

Sincerely,

Della M. Flusche

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Professor of History, Emerita
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Classical Music and Local Radio: A Confidential Summary

May-Sept. 1998
Della M. Flusche, Professor of History, Emerita
Eastern Michigan University
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Classical music in the broadcast industry

Classical music broadcasts, especially local productions, are disappearing from the radio dial and receive only intermittent airings on PBS-TV. The need for a vital element in our lives nevertheless persists. Filling the need ultimately rests on public opinion, which many sources teach and inform. The public currently receives lessons and examples that too frequently are devoid of moral content or actively promote immoral conduct. Senator Joseph Lieberman has taken a strong stand against purveying immorality. He insists on defending the family by upholding high moral standards, even as he recognizes human frailty. In his speech on the Senate floor, September 3, 1998, he remarked on the "negative messages communicated by the entertainment culture." He has urged "the music industry to stop selling products with obscene and violent material."¹ On NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" (9-6-98), the Senator mentioned his criticism of the electronic media. He might have added that while the airwaves advertize and transmit objectionable material they give less and less time to great music.

Classical music offers a genuine alternative to obscene, violent, and often excessively amplified programs that are tightening their grip on broadcasting. Reclaiming a place for classical music on the radio in Southeast Michigan, the greater Detroit metropolitan area, is the mission of the Detroit Classical Radio Corporation.² Three public-spirited individuals formed this non-profit organization to find a replacement for Greater Media's WQRS (105.1 FM) which dropped the local classical format in favor of rock programming, depriving the region of its only full-time classical station. With station owners demanding inflated prices for even leasing an FM frequency, the DCRC's efforts have thus far proved fruitless, despite the support of thousands of loyal listeners and a loosely organized, but dedicated, group of volunteers.

The public health issue of noise abatement grows as the alternatives to loud formats shrink. An AP story in *The Ann Arbor News* (1-8-92) reported that sound levels above 85 decibels (db) can cause hearing loss. Damage increases through extended exposure to dangerously high noise levels. Rock concerts can range from 90 to 130 db; portable stereos and car radios can reach 115 and 140 db, respectively. Audiologists are disturbed by the early on-set of hearing loss among children. J. David Singer, in a letter to *The Ann Arbor News* (5-22-96), argued against unregulated use of boom boxes because of the public health problem of deafness. He cited a French law banning the sale of stereos above 100 decibels and requiring warning labels. When President Bill Clinton was fitted for hearing aids in 1997, media comments noted that he incurred the hearing loss, common among Baby Boomers, that is caused by loud noise, including rock and roll.

¹See the text of the speech and reporting on Senator Lieberman's views in *The New York Times*, 9-4-98.

²See <http://www.pgxlimited.com/detroitclassicalradio>.

The eminent Anglican theologian, C. S. Lewis, writing his wise and witty *The Screwtape Letters* during the early years of World War II, contrasted the music and silence of Heaven with the diabolical noise permeating Hell. Screwtape, a Senior Devil, proclaims,

We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the Earth. The melodies and silences of Heaven will be shouted down in the end. But I admit we are not yet loud enough, or anything like it. Research is in progress.³

As the twentieth century draws to a close, research has advanced Screwtape's aims. The technology that can deliver great music to millions outside the concert hall is being used to create noise pollution.

Music and education

Scientific studies are examining how music affects learning and achievement in school. These studies demonstrate that classical music does have an impact, it does make a difference and in some cases creates an advantage. Although the Internet and satellites may soon provide inexpensive ways to transmit music, radio is presently the most cost-effective way to bring that advantage to the disadvantaged. Families who cannot afford music lessons or expensive equipment to play tapes and CDs can afford a radio and the benefits it can bring to their children. Teachers can use radio programs in classroom presentations. Learning and education not only occur in homes and schools but also draw from the community. The good effects of including the arts, both visual and musical, in the curriculum are multiplied when a community has resources to supplement and support what is taught in the classroom. A local classical music/fine arts radio station is a logical and useful educational resource because it makes the arts accessible to children whether at home or in the classroom. Research shows that schooling in the arts has its own value and also influences other aspects of learning and child development.

Business and industry are recognizing the educational value of the arts. For example, the General Electric Fund states:

Future business leaders will need creativity, discipline, and self-confidence to succeed. They'll have to think on their feet and communicate with their team. One of the best ways to develop these abilities is through hands-on participation in the arts . . . arts-in-education can transform learning. . . .⁴

The movie "Mr. Holland's Opus" served as a popular reminder of the value of music education. The actor Richard Dreyfus, who starred as the band director, has remarked that the arts "create a bedrock of imagination and creativity." Music teachers defend music education because music is part of our cultural heritage and helps students learn about various cultures; music is uplifting and an outlet for self-expression.⁵

Music and other fine and performing arts help bring parents and children together in cultural endeavors and thus promote parental involvement in education. "Arts Education in Public Elementary and

³C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York, 1959), 102-103.

⁴<http://www.ge.com/fund/ibfuna17.htm>

⁵<http://www.bcf.usc.edu/~ccline/mag/kidparents.html> and <http://www.bcf.usc.edu/~ccline/mag/music.html>

Secondary Schools" 1994, prepared by the National Center for Education shows that a large percentage (70-76%) of parents attend arts events that public schools sponsor. Smaller but significant percentages sponsor arts fundraisers and give support as volunteers. Students who study or experience the arts tend to have higher verbal and math scores on the SAT than those who do not. A 1994 Gallup Survey on music found that 93% of those polled thought music belongs in a well-rounded education, 86% favored instrumental music in regular course offerings, 88% thought music improves children's general intellectual development, 70% thought participating in school music programs led to better grades and test scores, and 85% favored community financial support for music programs.⁶

Dr. Frances Rauscher and Dr. Gordon Shaw conducted research on music and a form of spatial reasoning. They learned that young children who had music training showed improvement in the skills required for working puzzles and solving geometry problems. Rauscher and Shaw also tested college students who had listened to Mozart and did better on an IQ test than other students. Rauscher believes music builds self-esteem and increases the ability to concentrate.⁷ Dr. Rauscher, a psychologist, and Dr. Shaw, a physicist, went on to prove that piano instruction is better than computer training in helping young children develop the "reasoning skills necessary for learning math and science."⁸ In her article, "The Power of Music," Dr. Rauscher commented on her research "which proved that music plays a crucial role in early childhood development." Her work suggested that music training may be especially helpful for disadvantaged children. She explained that music "can help disadvantaged children to learn on [a] much more equal footing with children from more affluent backgrounds." In regard to the college students who listened to Mozart before an IQ test, Dr. Rauscher remarked, "simply listening to music can make a difference." She is convinced that music is a "way to boost human brain power." It "does more than entertain our children, it also shapes their minds."⁹

"The Mozart Effect Resource Center" on the Internet gives the following summary of recent findings on music and achievement. Music majors who applied to medical schools had a 66% rate of admission. Many engineers working in the Silicon Valley are practicing musicians. Children who are at risk show improvement in self-esteem. Don Campbell, the author of the book, *The Mozart Effect*, has produced CDs to improve learning, relaxing, and creative expression.¹⁰ A review of Campbell's *The Mozart Effect* stated that some community colleges have found that new immigrants learn English faster when they listen to Baroque music. Studies in Europe show listening to Mozart and Vivaldi makes it easier to learn to spell and to memorize poetry. Mozart in the workplace increases productivity.¹¹

⁶<http://tqd.advanced.org/3306/professions/musiced.html>

⁷http://www.gateway.unomaha.edu/GatewayWWW/The_Issues/Fall_1996/

⁸<http://www.amc-music.com/prbrain.htm>

⁹<http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/music.htm> reprinted from *Early Childhood News*, Sept./Oct. 1996

¹⁰<http://www.mozarteffect.com/textversion.html> and http://www.mozarteffect.com/text_the_mozart_effect.html

¹¹http://www.usaweekend.com/97_issues/970907/970907health_mozart.html

Vadim Prokhorov in "Will Piano Lessons Make My Child Smarter?" *Parade Magazine* (6-14-98), gives a simple summary of the Mozart Effect and its growing acceptance and application. A program in Georgia will send newborns home from the hospital with classical music recordings. Prokhorov lists steps parents can take to expose children to the benefits of music beginning in infancy. When children reach school age, he urges parents to see to it that music is part of the curriculum. He cites the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, who said "Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, and children should be taught music before anything else." Examples of school programs already in existence include having children read and listen to classical music each day before classes begin, distributing CDs to teachers for classroom use, and offering music classes. Comments on the benefits of exposure to music note that children gain in concentration, confidence, and willingness to stay with tasks. In his conclusion, the author refers to the value of music itself, particularly the pleasure that comes from listening to it.

Nita Sturiale, in "The Effects of Art Education on the Development of Cognitive Skills," discusses music because the areas of the brain used in music are also used for math. She emphasizes that arts training "is as necessary as writing and arithmetic to the development of the human brain."¹²

Basic, thorough research shows arts education helps young children learn language. Children themselves enjoy participating in arts and like school better. Those who participate have higher levels of creative development and lower absentee rates.; they also show progress in intellectual and social development.¹³

The U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley made the following statement on the value of the arts:

I believe arts education in music, theater, dance and the visual arts is one of the most creative ways we have to find the gold that is buried just beneath the surface. They [children] have an enthusiasm for life, a spark of creativity and vivid imaginations that need training. . . that prepares them to become confident young men and women.¹⁴

In 1993 National Standards for Arts Education were announced, stressing the importance of music, dance, theatre, and visual arts in K-12 education. The benefits children receive were described as follows. "Arts education . . . cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication." Society also benefits "because students of the arts gain powerful tools for understanding human experiences, both past and present. They learn to respect the often very different ways others have of thinking, working, and expressing themselves."¹⁵

Cultural diversity and careers in music

Great music can help not only children but also adults learn to respect others and build bridges to link the members of the human race. Cultural diversity and accessibility to careers are presently major topics in

¹²<http://www.tiac.net/users/nita/brainpaper.html>

¹³<http://www.musica.uci.edu/mrm/V212F95.html#elevator>

¹⁴<http://www.amc-music.com/maefs.htm>

¹⁵<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsStandards.html>

intellectual, economic, social, and political discussions. Both topics are significant when considering radio broadcasting. The current radio dial in Southeast Michigan gives classical music limited space and time. WUOM (91.7 FM) in Ann Arbor dropped local classical productions several years ago. NPR stations in East Lansing, and Toledo—which often use syndicated feeds lacking local content—and CBC in Windsor reach some listeners in the region during some hours of the week. No station covers the area as WQRS did. Listeners are denied an important option. Those who appreciate classical music as a vital component in cultural diversity and want to make great music accessible to more people are under represented in the radio medium. As a result, they actively support the DCRC in its campaign to build on the tradition WQRS established and restore the benefits of classical music to homes, autos, and workplaces. Eliminating Detroit as a classical music broadcasting center for the city and the entire Southeast Michigan region imposed a hardship on local artists and music students. Professionals and young people aspiring to careers in classical music lost not only a source of area-wide publicity for their talents and the opportunity to recruit an audience for their work but also a resource for enriching their knowledge of music.

In Southeast Michigan, colleges and universities offer courses and degrees in classical music. The faculties feature famous artists, including African Americans. Among these are Willis Patterson and Anthony Elliott at the University of Michigan and Glenda Kirkland at Eastern Michigan University. This past winter, in the Sphinx Competition in Ann Arbor, young African American and Hispanic students performed works for stringed instruments, with the first-place winner receiving a \$10,000-prize and the opportunity to appear with the National Symphony Orchestra. Young women competed in the Leontyne Price vocal contest sponsored by black business and professional women. Two Ann Arbor high school students won awards for violin and piano performances as part of a national contest that Omega Psi Phi Fraternity sponsored for young African Americans. Professional African American musicians are recognized on the national and international levels. Leslie B. Dunner, the resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra with an impressive list of accomplishments, will move on to the National Symphony in Washington.

A useful review of contemporary achievements with attention to the historical dimension is the Web site "Classical Music in Black and White" hosted by Indiana University Archives of African American Music and Culture. In the Spring 1998 posting, Steve Mencher reports on Wynton Marsalis winning the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1997. Mencher also reproduces an interview with James DePreist who is the nephew of Marian Anderson and a symphony conductor with a distinguished international reputation. Selections from an interview with Dominique-René de Lerma add information on black composers and performing artists. A list of recordings and books gives helpful references for further study.¹⁶

Renewed interest in masterpieces from Spain, Portugal, and Latin America has led to the performance and recording of music scores dating from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance-Baroque through the Classical

¹⁶<http://php.indiana.edu/~afamarch/home.html> and its links

Period. Since concert tickets and CDs are expensive, radio broadcasting can make the rich Iberian heritage that flourished in the Americas more accessible to both children and adults.

The Latin American Music Center at the School of Music Indiana University includes an online Newsletter and multiple links indicating the wealth that needs to reach a wide audience. For example, a link leads to the Dartmouth College site devoted to the study of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a famous scholar-poet in seventeenth-century Mexico, who wrote many poems that composers set to music.¹⁷

Movie fans who saw "The Mission" will remember its splendid musical score that echoed an historic era of European and Native American encounters in South America. T. Frank Kennedy, S.J., in "An Integrated Perspective: Music and Art in the Jesuit Reductions of Paraguay," describes aspects of the experience.¹⁸ For almost 200 years, Jesuits worked among the native peoples of Paraguay. Every Indian mission emphasized music, and each had its orchestra and choir. By mid seventeenth century, a large conservatory at Yapeyú taught advanced composition and performance while a workshop produced instruments. Domenico Zipoli, S.J. (Prato, Italy 1688-Córdoba, Argentina 1726) composed notable choral and instrumental works in South America after beginning his professional career in Italy. In evaluating the Jesuit approach, Father Kennedy writes, "Music, art, architecture, and poetry, then, are means of expression that gather people. The arts reach back to past visions of humankind's identity and reinterpret that past identity in a new way, holding the past and present in a dialectic and pointing toward a future expression that will evolve from the present one." This produces an "integrated perspective." (216) The partially restored church of Trinidad features a frieze, in high relief, with unmistakably Paraguayan Indian angels playing European-style musical instruments. The frieze suggests "that music may have been the string through time that connected, and in some manner held together" a vision of life as European and Guaraní culture interacted with each other. Music and other arts help "define, organize, and symbolize the unity of human experience on a very deep level." (220)

What Father Kennedy describes in Paraguay also existed in other Spanish and Portuguese missions. In cities, cathedrals sponsored organists, choirs, and composers who lent their talents to a distinctive, evolving culture drawing from European, Native American, and African origins.¹⁹

Radio listeners' reactions to the WQRS format change

The large WQRS audience should have been prepared for the format change that Greater Media implemented on November 21, 1997 by phasing in the rock group "Nine Inch Nails" to drown out a soprano aria. Greater Media had just axed WFLN in Philadelphia in similar fashion. Yet WQRS fans, unaware of or oblivious to newspaper reports of the impending change, experienced personal, shocked grief. Some simply bowed to a New Jersey-based corporation's decision, but most objected vehemently to silencing local announcers

¹⁷<http://www.music.indiana.edu/som/lamc>

¹⁸*The Jesuit Tradition in Education and Missions: A 450-Year Perspective*, ed. Christopher Chapple (Scranton: 1993), 215-229.

¹⁹Examples from the extensive bibliography are Robert M. Stevenson, *Music in Mexico, A Historical Survey* (New York, 1952), and his *Renaissance and Baroque Music Sources in the Americas* (Washington, 1970).

who had become true family friends as they introduced classical music using informed comments punctuated with good humor, teaching even as they entertained their diverse listeners.

"Radio/TV Dial Pages" by Michael R. Lewis provided a means of gauging reactions that showed strong support for classical broadcasting.²⁰ *The Detroit News* "Cyber Survey" poll found 72% of listeners opposed the format change. Since the poll depended on access to a computer, many former listeners could not participate. Letters in the survey feedback stressed feelings of grief, disappointment, and anger at the loss of a major cultural resource. A mother reported that her little girl protested against getting up because she didn't hear "The Sousa Alarm" [a popular early-morning feature]. Linette Popoff-Parks, Professor of Music at Madonna University, used the classical broadcasts for student assignments and described her loss as both personal and academic.²¹

The format change at WQRS forced former listeners in the greater Detroit metropolitan area to look to Windsor, with its Canadian focus on news and the arts, and NPR stations in East Lansing and Toledo, with their news highlighting Mid-Michigan and Ohio. Ironically, Detroit, its suburbs, and ex-urbs suffered this blow while classical music continues to flourish.

Classical music is alive and well in the USA and Southeast Michigan

The presence of classical music on the Internet indicates its popularity. In addition to the sites previously mentioned, there are biographies of composers and artists, magazines, reviews of recordings and concerts, and inventories of computer software. Some sites include audio components for listening to music by using a computer.²²

Bozeman, Montana--a Rocky Mountain town under 40,000 people, even with the Montana State University students--supports a rich variety of arts programs with modest, mainly private funding and community enthusiasm. A symphony, opera, ballet, theater, and visual arts all thrive. An old school building now serves as a cultural center for performances, arts education, studios, and galleries.²³

Classical music has enormous appeal; it reaches beyond a small, dedicated audience. For example, Robert Plant, a star of the rock and roll band, "Led Zeppelin," when interviewed on a classical radio program in January, 1998, gave a list of his 10 favorite classical compositions including a Mahler symphony and a Rachmaninov piano concerto.²⁴

Anna Russell's radio career featured spoofs on opera. Victor Borge parodied piano works in TV appearances. Both filled countless homes with laughter and made the names of composers familiar. The WQRS announcers used humor to extend the appeal and benefits of great music beyond the educated few to the eager-to-learn many.

²⁰<http://www.fcl.metronet.lib.mi.us/MIKEL/cgi-bin/detmedia.html>

²¹<http://data.detnews.com.8081/feedback/surveyletters.hbs>

²²Internet exploration can start with <http://www.gprep.pvt.k12.md.us/classical> and <http://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/music/genres/classical>

²³*The New York Times*, 4-14-98, B 1, 7.

²⁴<http://www.newklassical.com/section/rg/diary/robertplant.htm>

Yahlin Chang's "Cross Over, Beethoven" in *Newsweek* (April 20, 1998, 60-62) makes some valid points regarding the blurring of the line between popular and classical music. It nevertheless gives undue emphasis to CDs and sales statistics that tell only one side of the state of classical music. In previous centuries, European kings and nobles employed composers and artists to entertain aristocrats. Not long ago in the United States, wealthy patrons supported symphonic and operatic seasons in a few large cities, while many small localities could boast of little more than a high school band and church choirs. Now classical music thrives and perhaps enjoys more popularity than ever before. The crossover phenomenon itself is a current expression of the human aspiration for beauty. In Southeast Michigan, seven counties comprise the greater Detroit metropolitan area, home of an internationally acclaimed symphony orchestra and the highly respected Michigan Opera Theater. Less well known are the numerous instrumental and vocal organizations that include both professional and amateur musicians and feature gifted soloists. Over twenty symphonies, plus chamber ensembles, and religious and civic choirs perform great music for sizable audiences. These dedicated artists and appreciative listeners demonstrate their commitment to classical music. As mentioned above, our region's many institutions of higher learning offer students advanced music training. Another sign of vitality is the new DCRC. By endorsing this non-profit corporation, people from every walk of life are manifesting grassroots support for the arts, and they will welcome Aretha Franklin's appearance with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the 1998-1999 season.

The intrinsic value of classical music

Famous scholars from ancient times to the present have praised music and the gifts it brings to human life. Perhaps one of the best known sayings about sacred music, which holds a prominent place in classical programming, is "Praying is walking to God. Singing is running to Him."

Sister Wendy Beckett is a highly visible commentator on the fine arts today because of her popular TV series on painting. Her approach is to look at a picture, to let it speak to her. A similar approach can be used with music. When we listen, we hear the creative blending of melody, harmony, and tempo that speaks to us with an exquisite beauty. As Sister Wendy says, the experience of great art helps us cope with problems; it makes us freer and lifts us up toward truth.²⁵

Classical music's role in promoting physical and mental health

Luciano Pavarotti is establishing a center for children in Bosnia to experience music's healing power in the aftermath of war and violence.²⁶ Music therapy is a growing academic field that is gaining acceptance in treating physical and mental illnesses; Eastern Michigan University offers courses in the subject. Surely children and adults in the United States, whether suffering from diagnosed illness or merely facing routine stress, need the benefits of music's healing, uplifting power. Local radio is a proven means of delivering the medicinal dose.

²⁵Book and video tape entitled *Sister Wendy in Conversation with Bill Moyers*, Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation, 1997.

²⁶<http://www.warchild.org/project/centre/centre.html>